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Residential Product and Technology News at ISE 2008

This special edition HiddenWires print supplement looks at new products and technology for the residential custom install market at ISE 2008. For further coverage visit **ise.hiddenwires.co.uk.**

The trend in home automation is towards whole-house control. This includes not only traditionally automatable functions such as lighting, blinds, HVAC, and sprinklers, but AV systems too. The focus this year is on totally integrated systems and ease of control, with more manufacturers offering remote access via mobile and the Internet. For those who prefer to own content rather than rent it, there is a growing number of servers available, offering ever more sophisticated features. There are also many ingenious speaker and display mounting solutions to help users enjoy this content. There are installation and design tools, and a range of training opportunities. HD support up to 1080p is a key feature among distribution and switching products, plus numerous solutions for distributing media over CAT5. ISE 2008 promises to be a great show for the residential custom installer, with some exciting technology on offer!

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Whole-house control

Adapt Control Solutions (stand N80) is showing the Adapt HomeControl for distributed video and audio; control of HVAC, lighting, shutters, blinds, gates and garage doors; security; PC networking; messaging; and information system for timetables, cinema schedules, ordering takeout and taxis. It uses in-wall control panels, wireless PCs, WAP, and remote web-based control and programming. Designed to be user friendly, its graphical interface can be customised to create, for example, unique lighting scenes and sequences of events for morning routines - all without the assistance of a qualified programmer.

AMX (stands K36 and C62) is offering training seminars, presented in five languages, at stand K36, and exhibits at stand C62. These cover audio and video switching, control and distribution products resulting from the recent integration of ProCon Technology, Endeleo, AutoPatch and Matrix Audio Designs into the AMX Group. Making their European debut are the 5.2" Modero ViewPoint widescreen touchpanel (MVP-5200i) with stylish design, high-resolution graphics, wireless mobility, digital intercom functionality and extended battery life; and the Metreau voice- and video-over-IP (V2IP) enabled door communication and entry system. AMX is also demonstrating products from its Matrix high-quality, multiroom distributed audio systems.

The Adagio Media System (AMS) from **Crestron (stands F14 and F23)** adds sophisticated surround sound processing and video for home theatre to the Adagio family's complete whole-house audio distribution. The new AMS-AIP adds professional-quality video scaling up to 1080p, as well as on-screen control display. Also on show is the latest Isys touchpanel, the TPS-6L. This compact wallmount offers high-speed Ethernet communication for easy network integration and seamless communications with Crestron home automation solutions.

Philips (stand K10) is showing how the ProntoScript upgrade for the Pronto TSU9600 and TSU9400 touchpanels provides an integrated two-way home control solution. The units can receive feedback from RS232- or IP-controlled devices for advanced functionality beyond simply controlling home entertainment and automation systems. For example, the user could check whether the lights are currently on in a given room, consult temperature levels of HVAC systems, or quickly read volume levels for A/V devices. Custom installers can configure system feedback and dynamic user interfaces by selecting from a downloadable list of pre-configured modules, and customised modules can also be easily programmed.

Vantage (stand J23) is presenting the Axium 450 series multiroom amplifier. Also on show is WebPoint 2.0 software that allows the home owner to access, monitor and modify the Vantage home control system using a PC or a handheld web device, from anywhere in the world. This can be used to

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control and monitor lights, thermostats, and other systems. WebPoint 2.0 also provides analogue/USB camera support and can save video clips when it detects motion.

BMB (stand K28) is introducing the Niles iRemote TS control remote with colour touchscreen. This employs ZigBee two-way wireless technology, and is designed for operating the IntelliControl ICS whole-house distributed audio/video system and automating sophisticated home theatre systems.

Designed for whole-house control, the new Tactum 15W from **Vity (stand J109)** is a 15" multimedia LCD wall/tabletop touchpanel with a TCP/IP connection. The user can surf the Internet, check mail, and connect to other IP Vity controllers to control lights, shutters and HVAC. Its integrated webcam and loudspeakers allow it be used as a videophone, and its USB port supports connection to a DVB-T tuner.

Lighting

Lutron (stand O75) is featuring its range of lighting control and Sivoia QED shades, curtains and roman blinds drives. On show is the HomeWorks lighting control system being controlled by RF HomeWorks keypads as well as the Phillips Pronto. New seeTouch International HomeWorks keypads offer the choice of personalised engraving, infrared receiver control for intelligent remotes, and contact closure inputs for connection to motion detectors and door sensors. Lutron's latest consumer dimmers support loads up to 500W and include new metallic finishes. The company is also offering installers a design and layout service that meets the latest environmental criteria.

Crestron (stands F14 and F23) is showing a new series of European lighting control products that are programmable using Crestron software tools, and controllable using Crestron keypads and touchpanels.

Multiroom AV

Making its European debut from **SpeakerCraft (stand C70)** is MODE Free. This RF wireless version of the original MODE keypad offers full control of multiroom A/V sources from a palm-sized portable display which can be docked at the wall or tabletop. It offers scroll and click navigation, and the ability to display song information from iPod, music servers, XM tuners and the new iPhone. A full colour screen allows eight different music or video sources to be selected in up to sixteen different zones, and multiple users may access and adjust volume, source and content in any zone, from any location, simultaneously.

Asheridge (stand Q1888) is showing the ZoN 'out-of-the-box' multiroom audio system from US-based Oxmoor Corporation. The ZoN ZAS-430 offers six-zones of audio and features an LCD display for control, while the compact ZAS-130 is a space saving four-zone option.

AV receivers

Three new full HD AV receivers are being launched by **DMi D&M Installation (stand K49)**. The new models, one from Denon and two from Marantz, provide support for HD resolution video signals, with extensive HDMI connectivity, and all of the latest 7.1 channel audio formats, as well as compressed audio formats. The Denon AVR-4308DAB-HD features Ethernet, USB and wi-fi based networking and media streaming, while the Marantz SR8002 and SR7002 HD models are the company's most advanced AV receivers to date, and include new M-DAX technology for enhanced playback of compressed audio formats.

Servers

Another launch by **DMi D&M Installation (stand K49)** is the Escient Vision Series of HD digital media servers. These include support for 1080p video and the ability to 'ingest' content from DVD titles. The Vision range comprises the VS Series all-in-one HD media server and player platform, the VC-1 networked client player, and the large-capacity VX-600 media server. VS Series all-in-one media servers are designed for single-room installations. The VC-1 provides the same features but without the hard drive storage, and up to five VC clients can run from a single VS unit, streaming media over standard Gigabit Ethernet and enabling expansion of multiroom systems.

New from **Imerge (stand J13)** is the MP1000 Networked MediaPlayer. This expands the number of independent playback sources and control interfaces in an MS5000 MediaServer-based system. It offers integrated TV-based control, and not only plays content from a networked MS5000 server, but CDs and DVDs also via its built-in optical drive. So as well as being used in a centralised, analogue-distributed, rack-based installation, MP1000s can also be used in-room, connected via CAT5/Ethernet. For video, the MP1000 has integrated upscaling and de-interlacing hardware for video quality up to 1080p.

Kaleidescape (stand K63) is showing a new operating system that has the ability to automatically synchronise music from a Kaleidescape System to iTunes on a PC, iPod or other digital music player; a customisable classical music interface; greater data safety in the event of disk drive failure; and new options for sharing personalised movie scripts and favourite scenes with other Kaleidescape users.

Loudspeakers

Among the products on show from **SpeakerCraft (stand C70)** is the new AccuFit UltraSlim series of ceiling speakers. With a depth of only 51mm, the two UltraSlim models feature a single dome tweeter surrounded by four 3" drivers: two mid-range and two woofers. Also for the ceiling are three new models of the TIME motorised speaker. The drivers in each model are mounted at a fixed 45-degree angle inside a cylinder, which descends from the ceiling when activated. The installer then manually rotates the cylinder toward the listening area, and this returns to its flush position when deactivated.

RBH Sound (stand K87a) is previewing one of its new SX series loudspeakers in the

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ISE Home Cinema display. The series will include matching tower, centre and surround speakers in both 4" and 6" driver sizes, and a new subwoofer. The speaker on show is the SX4T tower. This can handle 250W, and has a frequency response of 35Hz-20kHz. It features a swept-back, teardrop-shaped cabinet, which rests on a high-gloss black base. Available in cherry, rosewood and black ebony, it has a 1" silk dome tweeter, a 4" aluminium midrange driver, four 4" aluminium woofers and a 3" front-firing port.

For those wanting the flattest of finishes, **SpeakerCraft (stand C70)** is showing eight new versions of the NEAT in-wall and in-ceiling speakers that leave no exterior flange exposed. The company is also showcasing 8", 10" and 12" versions of its Cinema in-wall subwoofers powered by a dedicated outboard amplifier in corresponding 150W, 200W and 250W versions. And for elite sound installations, SpeakerCraft is offering the new 'Plus' series of enclosed and ported loudspeakers for increased dynamic range, frequency response and sound pressure levels.

Armour Home (stand N64) is introducing the Q Acoustics Q-AV 5.1-style home cinema speaker package. Designed to fit below a modern flat screen television, the front three (left, centre and right) channel speakers fit onto a patented bracket, which adjusts for both width and front-to-back depth. This allows the speakers to be perfectly aligned with all 37-50" flatscreen televisions. Also included is a flexible single speaker grille assembly, which adjusts like a trombone slide, to ensure an exact fit. To complete the illusion, the Q Acoustics badge is magnetic and if required, can be removed, leaving no branding other than that of the television.

Sound reproduction without unsightly speakers or cable is what is being offered by **in-akustik (stand L150)**. Its AmbienTech system consists of AmbienTone sound walls that fit invisibly into the wall, and AmbienTrack cable conduit systems. AmbienTone sound walls are two-way flat diaphragm loudspeakers based on a bending wave transducer. They are integrated into modified plasterboard panels, which are installed in a dry-lined wall. AmbienTone can be connected to commercially-available amplifiers, and have an output of 40Watt/4Ohm impedance and a frequency response of 80Hz-18kHz. They are suitable for mono, stereo, 5.1 surround and multiroom configurations.

Wet areas and outdoors

A hot bath, ready and waiting for when you get home is what **Unique Automation (stand T1888)** is offering. The Bathomatic digital bath filler allows users to switch on the bath from anywhere inside or outside the home. It has a basic touchscreen interface in the bathroom, but can also be controlled by AMX, Crestron and other automation systems via RS232 or TCP/IP.

Aquavision (stand Q85) is debuting its Series4 HD Ready waterproof TVs for wet and steamy areas. Available in 17" (4:3), 19", 26", 32" and 40" widescreen sizes, the new models have an RS232 control port which is fully compatible with most home automation systems, enabling the television to be controlled from a compatible touchpanel anywhere in the home. The TVs also feature integrated Freeview digital and analogue tuners, component video, S-Video and analogue PC inputs, twin HDMI inputs on the 32" and 40" models, single HDMI on the 17", 19", and 26" models, full SCART connection, and built in games.

For outdoors, **Aquivo (stand Q166)** is showing a range of LCD screens that are resistant to water, dust and humidity. Available in a variety of different sizes, including the 55" which is the largest available on the market, Aquivo comes in fully-sealed, lightweight aluminium frames with a toughened glass front, and is designed to endure extreme weather conditions while maintaining brightness, contrast and colour quality. It includes the latest Full HD and HD Ready technology, is IP56 rated, and available with a full insurance policy and anti-theft bracket.

Also for outdoors are the new Xantech XOD Series speakers featured by **BMB (stand K28)**. These have a weather-resistant construction and a locking and pivoting bracket that allows them to blend into any environment while making installation fast and simple. The 6.5" design reduces dust and dirt build-up, and is available in a white finish.

Lifts and mounting

Weibel Lift (stand Q176) is previewing the MINI 150 projector lift. This has been designed with regular 60x60cm ceiling panels in mind, and as with other Weibel projector lifts, only requires a depth of 15cm, including the projector, to be built into the ceiling. In addition, while traditional scissor lifts lack precision when opening and closing the hatch, Weibel projector lifts use a patented spindle system that allows them to move up and down with less than 0.1mm deviation.

The new **Chief (stand K14)** in-wall swing arm mounts for 26-63" flat panels are designed to eliminate the need to cut studs, and are less than 8" wide, including the in-wall box and swim arm mount. The MIWV, MIWU and PIWU provide a complete in-wall mounting solution that ships with a pre-assembled swing arm and in-wall box to save time and simplify installation. The new design allows accurate on-wall TV positioning without the need to disturb walls by cutting into studs or installing headers, and can retrofit to existing constructions with minimal drywall work.

Chief (stand K14) is also showing the CM2C40 automated ceiling lift for high-end installations. Designed for applications where the flat panel needs to be hidden when not in use, the CM2C40 provides fast up/down travel at over 2" (51mm) per second, with customisable stops. It supports flat panel TVs up to 61" and weighing a maximum of 190lbs (86.2kg), and has a proprietary Auto Drive gliding system that offers fast and quiet adjustment. The CM2C40 provides up to 40" (101.6cm) of travel with a stored height of only 31" (787mm), and a cable management system is included.

Peerless (stand L87) is debuting twelve new SmartMount articulating arm wallmount

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models that accommodate TVs from 32-63". These provide four internal cable management channels for cable routing, each with 1" of cable storage space per channel. The channels allow easy management of A/V cables and even pro-cord bundles, keeping them virtually hidden from sight. Horizontal adjustment on the wall plate is up to 10.75", and single-stud or double-stud mount models are available. Peerless is also showing the SP850-UNL SmartMount pull-out swivel wallmount for 32" to 58" flatpanel TVs, and the PRG precision gear projector mount that offers pin-point image alignment with a simple turn of a knob.

For those interested in easy and secure installation of short-throw projectors, **Chief (stand K14)** is announcing the WPA projector wallmount. This allows the projector to be adjusted from and to the wall, from 2" up to 12.5". It also offers quick connection and disconnection of the projector and easy wall distance adjustability, all without tools, and a security hardware kit. Compatible with all short throw models, custom interfaces are available for Sanyo, Hitachi and Toshiba.

Cables and connectors

ICM (stand A52) has expanded its line of compression tools to include the F-Conn Standalone Splice Connector. This improves signal quality and reduces installation time by allowing installers to terminate cables directly to a wall plate. For installations in cramped and confined spaces, the company offers the F-Conn Right Angle Connector with a patented 360-degree compression ring. This ensures quality signals and solid permanent connections, as well as a positive stop that guides the cable into the connector.

BTX (stand C67) is showing the MaxBlox EZ termination system, comprising 15-pin VGA connectors with Phoenix contact terminal blocks; DB9 connectors that can be terminated with a screwdriver; and a solderless 3.5mm stereo connector that fits in a standard half-inch, D-style punch.

On the **BMB stand (K28)** are two new Tributaries ranges of interconnects. Both are offered in families dedicated to video, analogue audio, digital audio, and digital video. The Series 9 is the company's new flagship cable, while the Series 7 uses less-costly materials in selected, less-critical positions.

For projects where an installer has pre-wired with CAT5e cable and now wishes to add additional services at the data outlet plate, **Asheridge (stand Q1888)** offers the MuxLab range. This includes a choice of VGA passive, long-reach active, digital audio and stereo hi-fi baluns, PS2 converters and an HDTV component video hub.

Power and wiring

On the **Elan/Sunfire stand (L49)** are new Elite power management products from Furman. With smooth contours of black steel and clear blue LED lights, they offer the same performance and technologies as the existing Elite series. The Elite-10E i features a digital AC voltage meter, and proprietary Series Multi-Stage Protection Plus (SMP+) technology, which combines three filtering and protection circuits. In addition to SMP+ technology, the Elite-16 PF E i features Furman's Power Factor Technology for optimum performance for power amplifiers and powered subwoofers, providing a reservoir of over 55A peak current-on-demand to eliminate the ill effects of line impedance and current compression on dynamic audio content.

Distribution and switching

Unicam (stand E70), is showing Audio Authority high-definition CAT5 distribution products, including the AVAtrix home theatre matrix router with six inputs and seven outputs (expandable up to 37 outputs), and the DuoDrive and SixDrive systems. Unicam is also demonstrating a full HDCP-compliant HDMI distribution system. The new Model 9879 CAT5 receiver is a Decora style wallplate that fits a single-gang j-box. Its front- and rear-facing IR jacks are compatible with free-standing and in-wall IR receivers. The Model 9880 is a surface- or in-wall-mountable enclosed receiver.

Smart-e (stand I90) is exhibiting a range of mid- and high-end SNX range matrices, including 'the one cable solution'. This allows transmission of HD signals up to 1080p, digital audio and power, all via one cable. The matrices can distribute and switch all formats of video, and transmit professional, high-quality sound and images, from DVD players, set-top boxes, video cameras, laptops and PCs, to LCD and plasma screens, cinematic projectors, PC monitors and speakers, at a distance of up to 300m. The switches also feature infrared and RS232 control passthrough, IR and RS422 matrix control options, inline power and 'plasma-friendly eyes'.

Also for applications where HD video must travel beyond a few meters, **Gefen (stand H47)** is offering a selection of HDTV extenders. Depending on the signal distance from source to display, users have the option of selecting fibre optic or CAT5 cables to work with Gefen's sender/receiver system to deliver HD resolutions up to 1080p with multichannel digital audio. The HDMI CAT-5 MS Extender offers reliable delivery up to 100m over CAT5, with complete HDMI and HDCP compliance built in. The HD-1000 for HDMI v1.3 will work up to 100m, and is compatible with all HDMI-based disk players, satellite boxes and displays.

Software tools

D-Tools (stand F09) is showing the latest release of its award-winning System Integrator software, SI5. The result of feedback from customers, SI5 is available for download to current users, and includes new features and enhancements such as EZ Match Data Import for importing data from a price book or a bill of materials and merge with existing data; QuickBooks 2008 US compatibility; AutoCAD 2008 compatibility; Add Products to Multiple Locations from Add Product/Package Dialogues; Database Estimated Price Preview; Update Case in Projects for enforcing consistent casing of manufacturer, category and model fields; Spell Check; Improved Project Check-out; and more.

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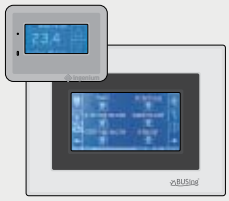
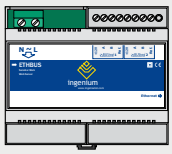


Discreet touch screen control

The lighting and heating controls enable property managers and residents to control timing, temperature and even the ambience of the light and heat in any room.



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